AMENDMENT

Please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please **AMEND** Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 19, 21, 22, 29, 37, 42, 44, 45, 52, 56, 59, 66, 69, 76, 80, 83, 84, 87, and 89 as follows:

1.   (AMENDED) An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said apparatus comprising:

an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a customer's identification; and

a signal processing system responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for retrieving from memory a first discount awarded to the customer and, calculating a second discount based on a predefined time period from signals stored in said memory indicative of a date of a last visit of the customer to the retail establishment and [a] the first discount.

3.   (AMENDED) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said input device includes at least one of a bar code scanning device [for scanning an encoded bar code], a magnetic storage [medium] device, and an optical storage [medium] device.

5.   (AMENDED) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount upon expiration of said pre-defined time period, wherein said pre-defined time period begins at a pre-defined date.

8.   (AMENDED) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount by decreasing said [second] first discount to a pre-defined minimum discount if said date of said last visit is prior to said pre-defined time period.

9.   (AMENDED) [The apparatus of claim 1,] An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said apparatus comprising:

        an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a customer's identification; and

        a signal processing system responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a second discount based on a predefined time period from signals stored in said memory indicative of a date of a last visit of the customer to the retail establishment and a first discount,

        wherein said process updates said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment; and to update said first discount with said second discount.

13.   (AMENDED) [The apparatus of claim 1,] An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said apparatus comprising:

        an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a customer's identification; and

        a signal processing system responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a second discount based on a predefined time period from signals stored in said memory indicative of a date of a last visit of the customer to the retail establishment and a first discount,

wherein said process further accesses a date indicative of the last time said first discount changed.

16.   (AMENDED) An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer, the apparatus comprising:

an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date indicative of an expiration date of said first conditional discount; and

a signal processing system, responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a first earned discount based on a pre-defined time period from signals [indicative of] stored in said memory indicative of said first conditional discount and said first date; for calculating a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value; and for generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date indicative of an expiration of said second conditional discount.

19.   (AMENDED) [The apparatus of claim 16,] An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer, the apparatus comprising:

an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date indicative of an expiration date of said first conditional discount; and

a signal processing system, responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a first earned discount based on a pre-defined time period from signals stored in said memory indicative of said first conditional discount and said first date; for calculating a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount

by a pre-defined value; and for generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date indicative of an expiration of said second conditional discount,

    wherein said process determines said first earned discount is equal to said first conditional discount decreased by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

21.   (AMENDED) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said input device includes at least one of a bar code scanning device [for scanning an encoded bar code], a magnetic storage device [medium], [or] and an optical storage [medium] device.

22.   (AMENDED) A computer encoded with computer program code for:
    receiving an identifier representative of [the] a customer;
    accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of a last visit of [a] the customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount associated with the customer and;
    determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period.

29.   (AMENDED) [The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for:] A computer encoded with computer program code for:
    receiving an identifier representative of the customer;
    accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of a last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount;
    determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period;

updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment; and

updating said first discount with said second discount.

37.   (AMENDED) The computer of claim 22, wherein said identifier [comprises an] is encoded in at least one of a bar code, a magnetic storage medium, and an optical storage medium.

42.   (AMENDED) [The computer of claim 39,] A computer encoded with computer program code for:

receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;

determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;

determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value; and

generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount,

wherein determining said first earned discount comprises decreasing to said first conditional discount by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

44.   (AMENDED) The computer of claim 39, wherein said first and second identifier [comprises an] are encoded in at least one of a bar code, a magnetic storage medium, and an optical storage medium.

45.   (AMENDED) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:

receiving an identifier representative of [the] a customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of [a] the customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount associated with the customer; and

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period.

52.   (AMENDED) [The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program code further for:] A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:

receiving an identifier representative of the customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount;

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period;

updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment; and

updating said first discount with said second discount.

56.   (AMENDED) [The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program further for:] A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:

receiving an identifier representative of the customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount;

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period; and

accessing a date indicative of said last time said first discount changed.

59.   (AMENDED) The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said identifier [comprises an] is encoded as at least one of a bar code, a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

66.   (AMENDED) [The storage medium of claim 63,] A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:

receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;

determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;

determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value; and

generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount

wherein determining said first earned discount comprising decreasing to said first conditional discount by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

69.   (AMENDED) A data processing machine-implemented method for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said method comprising:

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receiving an identifier representative of the customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount associated with the customer; [and]

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period; and

outputting the second discount.

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76.   (AMENDED) [The method of claim 69, further comprising:] A data processing machine-implemented method for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said method comprising:

receiving an identifier representative of the customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount;

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period;

updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment; [and]

updating said first discount with said second discount; and

outputting the second discount.

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80.   (AMENDED [The method of claim 69, further comprising:] A data processing machine-implemented method for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said method comprising:

receiving an identifier representative of the customer;

accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount;

determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period;

outputting the second discount; and

accessing a date indicative of the last time said first discount changed.

83.   (AMENDED) The method of claim 69, wherein said identifier [comprises an] is encoded as at least one of a bar code, a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

84.   (AMENDED) [The] A data-processing machine-implemented method of determining a discount for a customer, the method comprising:

receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;

determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;

determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value; [and]

generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount; and

outputting the second discount.

87.   (AMENDED) [The method of claim 84,] A data-processing machine-implemented method of determining a discount for a customer; the method comprising:

  receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;

  determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;

  determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value;

  generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount; and

  outputting the second discount,

  wherein said first earned discount is equal to said first conditional discount decreased by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

89.   (AMENDED) The method of claim 84, wherein said first and second identifier [comprises an] are encoded as at least one of a bar code, a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.